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Statement submitted by European Union of Women, Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas (FAWCO), Graduate Women International (GWI), International Alliance of Women, International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), International Council of Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation on Ageing, Les Amis du Projet Imagine, Make Mothers Matter, Mothers Legacy Project, Pax Romana, Servas International, Socialist International Women, Soroptimist International, Verein zur Forderung der Volkerverstandigung, Widows for Peace through Democracy, Women's International Zionist Organization, World Union for Progressive Judaism and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

The Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas, and the undersigned non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) who are members of the Non-governmental Committees on the Status of Women (Vienna and Geneva), present the following statement to the members and observers of the 63rd United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

Social protection is a key human rights-based strategy for eradicating poverty and increasing equality and social justice to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that over 70 per cent of the world's population, more than five billion people, mostly women, are not covered by comprehensive social security systems. Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that "every member of society has the right to social security." Sustainable Development Goal One, "end poverty in all its forms everywhere," calls for nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all by 2030. The ILO's Social Protection Floors Recommendation (2012) called for governments to establish social protections for all in need, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976) committed its parties to work toward granting an adequate standard of living.

Gender-sensitive social protection measures require the recognition of women's and girls' needs and priorities, as well as their time and energy constraints. The links between accessible quality public services, education, health systems and infrastructure and the empowerment of women and girls are clear, and essential for achieving Sustainable Development Goal #5, "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." Social protection systems, public services and infrastructure programs should be based on thorough needs assessments which recognize the variety of women's roles.

Women and girls do a disproportionate share of unpaid and low-paid work, and experience time poverty. This restricts their access to education and decent work, negatively impacts their health and well-being, limits their opportunities and undervalues their contributions. Access to infrastructure and public services benefits women and girls by decreasing the burdens of unpaid and low paid work, enabling them to devote more time to education and income-generating activities, and improve their livelihoods, which in turn will benefit families and communities. Infrastructure investments designed to loosen traditional gender roles and social norms accelerate women's economic empowerment.

Unconditional universal social protection would avoid stigmatization, promote inclusion and equality, and reduce gender stereotypes. Economic empowerment for women and girls will require transformations in the systemic policies and stereotypes which disadvantage women in the family, community and labour market: unpaid and underpaid work and the gender pay gap, and the lack of income security for older women and widows.

The provision of public services should never be considered an opportunity for profit-making. Empowered educated citizens and responsible governments — not market systems -- should create inclusive societies based on rules to safeguard human liberty, equality and dignity.

Women create, nurture and sustain communities and maintain ecological systems. Gender-sensitive social protection systems, public services and infrastructure programs will bring community networks, connect women with new

opportunities, and strengthen social inclusion and the collective action necessary to achieve the ambitious and inclusive goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The undersigned members of the non-governmental organization Committee on the Status of Women Vienna submit the following recommendations for consideration by the members and observers of the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women, and call upon Member States to:

Provide unconditional, universal social protection to all in all stages of the life cycle, and implement policy frameworks to meet basic needs for all, especially migrant and refugee women and girls, people with disabilities, the elderly, and widows;

Adopt policies to narrow gender pay gaps, enhance women's access to income and pensions, and provide family allowances for children;

Provide comprehensive health services which address gender-specific risks and needs, including sexual and reproductive health services for girls and women, child and maternity services, mental health services, and care for survivors of gender-based violence;

Involve women and women's organizations in the definition of essential services for priority public funding, and support women's participation in infrastructure development planning and decision-making;

Analyse women's specific needs and constraints, and address these through gender-sensitive infrastructure programs and policies;

Design innovative gender-inclusive infrastructure projects to ensure women's security in all public spaces and on public transportation;

Mitigate the environmental impacts of infrastructure developments including roads, water, transport;

Involve women and women's organizations in participatory monitoring mechanisms such as social audits to improve the design and delivery of gender-responsive programs;

Increase support for women's non-governmental organizations and involve civil society, especially women and women's organizations in the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of social protection, public services and infrastructure developments.